

Your problems: how to handle them

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What are *your* problems?

Chances are they're very much like the problems
that bother most boys and girls.

This booklet discusses these problems
and suggests ways *you* and all boys and girls
can handle your problems.

Your Problems: How to Handle Them is part of the series
of SRA's Junior Guidance Series Booklets
for boys and girls.

These booklets are written to help *you* with *your* problems.

SRA

Junior
GUIDANCE SERIES

Your problems: how to handle them

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Sketches by SEYMOUR FLEISHMAN

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Things that bother you

Bill Watts sat staring out the window of Room 103 at Hawthorne School. It was spring and wonderful baseball weather. But the thought of it only made Bill unhappy.

You see, Bill had a problem. Last year he had been one of the best hitters on the baseball team. This year he just couldn't hit at all. In fact, most of the time he struck out. When he did connect, it was usually a pop-up. He just couldn't seem to get his arms to do what he wanted them to.

More problems

Bill Watts wasn't the only one in Room 103 who was worried. Nancy Spears had a problem, too. She was shy and she felt that people didn't like her very much. She was the tallest girl in the room, and none of the boys ever walked home with her or teased



Is this your problem? Do you walk from school alone all the time?

her in that special way they teased the girls they liked. Instead, they stood off and yelled "beanpole" whenever she passed them.

"If only," Nancy thought, "if only there were some magic medicine I could take to make me shrink."

Mary McCarthy had a still different problem. Her little brother was always snooping through the things in her room and annoying her in every way he could. But if Mary got angry at *him*, her father and mother scolded *her*. Mary didn't think it was fair, but she didn't know what to do about it. She felt sure her parents loved her little brother more than they loved her.

And more problems

Bill, Nancy, and Mary weren't the only ones with problems. Almost everyone in Room 103 worried about something. And the boys and girls in Room 103 were no different from people everywhere. Just about *everybody* has problems—even babies.

There are many different kinds of problems. Not everybody has exactly the same number of problems—or even the same kind. But if everyone in your school were to make a list of his

problems, you would probably find that many of them were almost alike. Many boys and girls have the same kinds of problems. Here are more problems that bothered the boys and girls in Miss Smith's class. Are any of these your problems, too?

Why do I always say the wrong thing at the wrong time?

I don't get very good marks in school.

I can't stand to be pestered or have my hair pulled at.

My problem is my brother because he is always bothering me.

I wish I had more money to spend.

I worry about my health.

My problem is that I wish I wouldn't have any pimples on my face.

Some of the girls make fun of me.

What bothers you?

You have read about some of the problems that bothered the boys and girls in Room 103. Now, in the space below, write down a list of *your* problems—the things that bother you or worry you.

My problems

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What this booklet is about

Not long ago 4,500 school boys and girls in all parts of the country were asked to write down the things that bothered them. When these lists were compared, it was found that the same problems kept appearing again and again. The replies of these boys and girls showed that a great many young people worry about the same things, want the same things in life, and get angry about the same things.

In this booklet we're going to tell you about the results of this study of the problems of boys and girls. We shall discuss the problems that are found to be important to most boys and girls—problems about: (1) your health, (2) getting along with other people, (3) you and your school, (4) about yourself, and (5) about you and your home. And this booklet will suggest ways these problems can be solved satisfactorily.

By finding out about the things that bother most boys and girls your age, you can understand your own problems much better. And when you discover that lots of other boys and girls have the same problems you do, yours won't seem quite so tremendous or so difficult to solve.



Solving your problems

One day Paul Lee came to school looking mad as a hornet. "That brother of mine!" blurted Paul. "He got into my room this morning and broke my model airplanes. It's not the first time, either."

"Boy! You do have a problem," commented Frank. "What are you going to do about it?"

Can problems be solved?

Here is a typical problem—one that bothers many boys and girls. Do you think anything can be done about this problem?

In order to solve a problem you must: 1) *know what your problem is and what's causing it*; 2) *know if you can do anything about it*. And if you can do something about it, you must 3) *know what you can do*.

These three points can be translated into steps for solving any personal problem.

How to solve your problem

1. Find out exactly what the problem is. Write it down along with the *cause* of it. (Remember, *why* you have the problem is part of the problem.)
2. List all the different ways of solving the problem.
3. Decide which way works best for you and go to work on it.

Solving Paul's problem



Paul knew what his problem was. At least he thought he did. His little brother always managed to get into his room and then he broke Paul's model airplanes.

What Paul didn't know was *why* his little brother behaved as he did. And knowing *why* was a very important part of knowing exactly *what* Paul's problem was. When Paul stopped to think about it, he could see that his little brother was unhappy about not being able to do the more grown-up, complicated things Paul did—like making model airplanes. He felt that he couldn't do things as well as Paul could, and so he tried to destroy the things Paul made.

As a matter of fact, Paul could remember feeling the same way when he was little. Even now, he often wished he could do some of the things that older boys do.

Paul thought of all the different things he could do to solve his problem and what the results of each method would be.



Is your brother or sister your big problem? Here's one way you can solve it.

What is the best way?

1. Paul could try keeping the model planes where his brother wouldn't be able to reach them. But then his brother might only find something else in Paul's room to break.

2. He could hit his brother or threaten to break some of his brother's things. But that didn't seem right because his brother was so much younger than Paul.

3. He could let his brother watch him make one of the planes. He could even give him a small piece of wood and help him make a very simple plane of his own. Then his brother probably wouldn't *want* to break up Paul's planes any more.

The more Paul thought about the different solutions, the more sure he was that the last one was the best. Understanding *why* he had the problem certainly helped him find a way to do something about it.

Solving problems can be easy

Very often, doing something about your problems isn't half as difficult as you think it's going to be. Certainly, just fussing and brooding about something that's bothering you isn't going to help you get rid of the problem. It's much better to bring a problem out in the open and try to solve it.

Do you know about problem-solving?

Check whether each statement below is true or false.

	True	False
1. People who are smart don't have problems.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Sometimes just talking about your problems helps to solve them.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. You can't learn anything about solving problems from other people's experience.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. If you have a problem, the best thing to do is to try not to think about it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Every problem can be solved right away.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Turn the book upside down to find the correct answers.

Answers: 1, 3, 4, and 5 are false. 2 is true.



Problems about yourself

Bill and Nancy and Paul were not the only ones in Room 103 with problems. Others in the room had worries, too. This was shown very clearly when Miss Smith gave each person in the class a list of problems that bother boys and girls. Miss Smith asked the class to read the list of problems very carefully and then check the statements that were problems of theirs.

One section listed problems about yourself. Knowing about yourself—knowing the kind of person you are and understanding why you do the things you do is very important in solving almost *all* of your problems.

Do you know yourself?

You're used to thinking about your friends and others in terms of the kind of people they are. You may think your school principal is too strict, and the man who runs the little candy shop at the

corner is an awful grouch, that your best friend's father is a good sport, that your Aunt Sari is one of the nicest persons you know.

But have you ever thought about what kind of person *you* are? Are you cheerful? Do you get along well with other people? Do you think only about yourself?

Here are some of the statements many boys and girls checked. Do any of these problems bother you? Put an *x* in the box next to *your* problem.

Problems about myself

1. I get mad too much. ☐
2. I am not nice looking. ☐
3. I bite my fingernails too much. ☐
4. I always get into trouble. ☐
5. I feel bad about things I do. ☐
6. I'm afraid to be home alone at night. ☐
7. I'd like to get a job. ☐
8. I worry too much. ☐
9. I'd like more clothes. ☐
10. I'd like to know what I'm going to be when I grow up. ☐
11. I'm afraid of the dark. ☐
12. I wish I were good at games. ☐
13. I am too bashful. ☐
14. I am too crabby. ☐
15. I don't have much fun. ☐

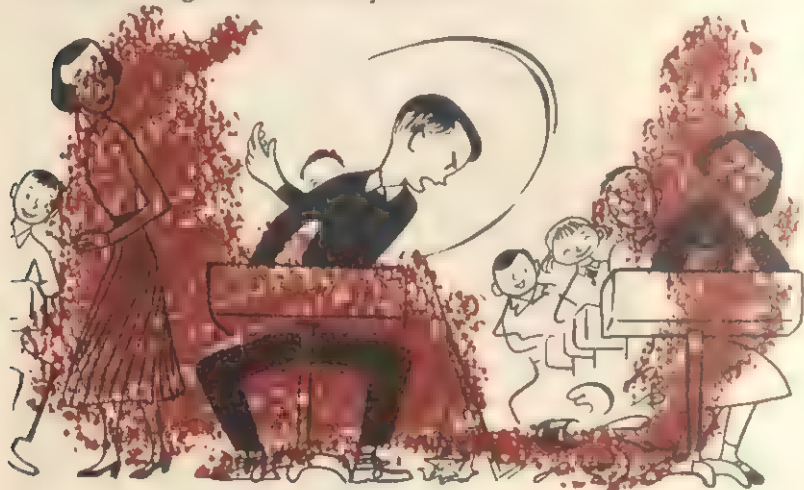
How many of these statements did you check? Whether you checked one statement or all 15 of them, you should know other boys and girls have checked the statements, too. This is to be expected because children often have similar problems. In the following section, some of the items checked by the boys and girls in Miss Smith's class will be described. Perhaps some of them are your problems, too.

Getting mad

Harold Schultz checked the problem, *I get mad too much*. Even as he marked an *x* beside that statement, his face and ears

began to burn. He was reminded of what had happened in school earlier in the day.

Harold had been trying to draw a figure with a compass. The figure just wouldn't come out right. After several tries, he had crumpled up the paper and thrown it to the floor along with the compass and a jar of paste. The paste had gone all over the aisle, and Miss Smith had made him clean it up. When the boys and girls laughed at him, Harold felt just like a baby! "What makes me do things like that, anyway?" Harold wondered. "Other people don't seem to get mad as easily as I do."



Are you like this boy? Do you lose your temper much too easily?

But Harold isn't the only one who loses his temper easily. Five boys and girls in Miss Smith's class of 30 checked the problem. In the study of problems of boys and girls all over the country, 17 out of every 100 boys and girls checked this problem.

Not nice looking?

Other problems were checked, too. Eight girls and six boys in Miss Smith's room checked the problem, *I am not nice looking*. This problem bothers many boys and girls all over the country. In the problem study, 19 out of every 100 boys and 28 out of every 100 girls checked this problem.

There may be many reasons why boys and girls are worried about their appearance. If this is one of *your* problems, check yourself on the following questions:

	Yes	No	Don't Know
1. Do I always look neat and clean?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Do I comb my hair in a becoming way?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Do I wear the colors that look best on me?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Are my fingernails always clean?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Do I wear the kind of clothes I look best in?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Are my teeth always clean and white?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Is my posture good?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Do I usually look happy and cheerful?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Give yourself 10 for every *yes* answer. A score of 80 means you are probably making the most of your looks. A score of 70 is still safe, but should serve as a warning to be careful. A score of 60 or less means you need to look yourself over and see if you can do something about the way you look!

Biting your fingernails

I bite my fingernails too much is another problem that bothers many boys and girls. Thirty-two out of every 100 grade school boys and 38 out of every 100 grade school girls checked this problem. Fingernail biting is a *habit*, something done without thinking.

"I bite my fingernails too much."



boys 32%
girls 38%



If you bite your nails, ask your family and perhaps your best friend to help you out by reminding you quietly whenever they see you doing it. As soon as they remind you of it, try to figure out what made you start biting your nails at that particular time. Were you worried about something? Were you excited? Were you angry? Knowing the reason for the habit might help you stop it.



If you bite your fingernails, ask your family to remind you to stop.

At the same time, you can try using *self-control*—take your fingers out of your mouth and stop biting your nails as soon as someone tells you that you are doing it.

Feeling bad about things you do

Another statement checked by many of the boys and girls throughout the country and in Miss Smith's class, too, was *I feel bad about the things I do*.

Alice Loring checked this problem. She had taken a dollar from her mother's purse and spent it. She worried a lot about having done such a thing, but she was afraid to tell anyone about it.

Jimmy Lake checked this problem, too. He felt bad because he had cheated during a test the other day.

Janet Roth felt bad because she had told an important secret her best friend had asked her not to tell.

What to do?

Many boys and girls feel bad about the things they do. In the nationwide study, 15 out of every 100 boys and girls checked this problem. What can Alice or Jimmy or Janet do to feel better?

Just finding out that other boys and girls are ashamed about things they do will help them some. Of course, Alice and Jimmy and Janet may still feel guilty. But they do not need to feel that they are criminals or helpless cheats and different from everybody else. They can also decide to try to find out *why* they do things they later regret.

For example, Alice should think about why she took the dollar from her mother. Perhaps it was because she feels that she never has enough money for the things she wants. Alice might try talking to her mother about her allowance and about ways she might earn some money. Once Alice does these things, she'll be well on the way to solving her problem.

Being afraid

We all have to be afraid of some things—of snakes, guns, busy streets, of fires. Each of these could hurt us. But if we are afraid of things that can't hurt us—like water, the dark, or high school—or if we're afraid of busy streets, fires, guns out of proportion to their real danger—then we have a problem.

Here are some of the findings from that nationwide study: Out of every 100 boys and girls—

17 said I'm afraid of tests.

3 said I'm afraid of teachers.

7 said I'm afraid of the doctor.

13 said I'm afraid of the dentist.

8 said I'm afraid of the dark.

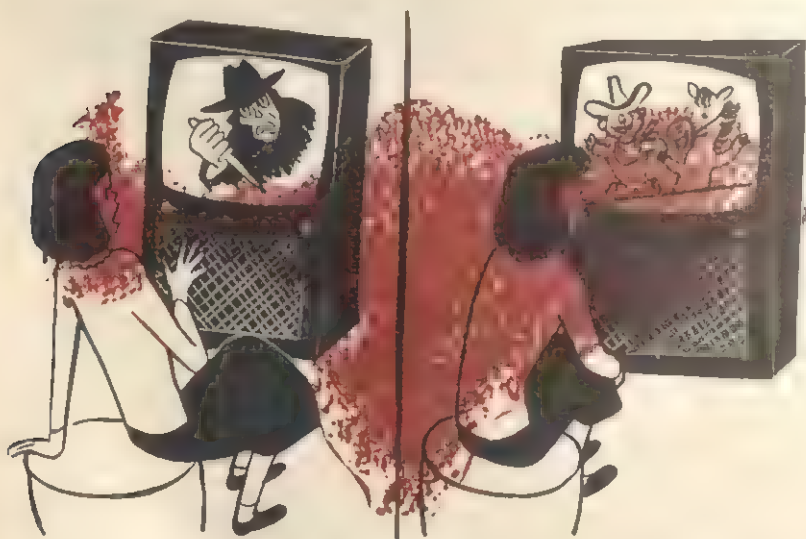
15 said I'm afraid to be home alone at night.

These last two items don't bother older pupils so much. Over four times as many fourth-graders as eighth-graders checked *I'm afraid of the dark*. And almost three times as many fourth-graders as eighth-graders checked *I'm afraid to be home alone at night*.

How Jane handled her fears

Jane had checked the problem, *I'm afraid to be home alone at night*. Jane was almost old enough to be a baby-sitter herself. But when her mother and father went out occasionally in the evening, Jane was terrified to be alone. Even after she'd made sure that all the windows and doors were locked and that nobody could possibly get into the house from the outside, she jumped every time the windowpane rattled or a leaf rustled outside.

Jane and her mother talked about why she was afraid. They wanted to try to find out what to do about it. Jane realized that she was most fearful after watching mystery stories on TV at night. They decided to try substituting other programs for most of the nighttime mysteries.



When you're alone, choose pleasant programs, not frightening ones.

Then Jane's mother suggested that sometimes Jane might invite a friend to spend the evening with her when her parents were going to be gone. Other times, they decided, it would be a good idea for Jane to plan to do something she especially enjoyed—like making fudge, or using her oil paints, or sewing on her mother's sewing machine. Jane's mother knew that doing special things or having special privileges when you're by yourself can help you to enjoy being alone.

Jane agreed to try all three suggestions to see if they'd help her to stop being afraid to be home alone at night. If being alone at night bothers you, you might follow Jane's example. Save some of the things you really like to do for the nights when you'll be home alone.

Jobs—now and later

"I'd like to get a job."

29%



Many boys and girls checked this item: *I'd like to get a job*. Out of every 100 boys and girls who checked their problems, 29 indicated concern about jobs.

One of the reasons so many boys and girls want jobs, of course, is that they would like to have more money to spend.

Some parents give their children a weekly allowance. Other boys and girls have to earn all—or at least part—of their own spending money.

Many boys and girls don't know what kind of jobs they can get.

There may not be many jobs for a boy or girl in your neighborhood. But if you look around a bit you will surely find some kind of job. Such things as yard work, shoveling snow, or running errands for the families in the neighborhood offer ways for many boys to earn extra money. Often grocery stores need delivery boys. Boys can sometimes get jobs selling magazines or delivering newspapers.

What is there for the girls? Many girls get offers for baby-

sitting jobs. But parents sometimes feel that school girls are too young for so much responsibility. When this is true, here is a suggestion. A group of two or three girls might offer to play with small children in the afternoons, giving the children's mothers a chance to go shopping, catch up on housework, or even relax. Girls could do the grocery shopping for neighbors, if the stores are not too far away.

Sometimes parents prefer to have their children help out and earn money at home. After they have done the chores they are responsible for, like helping with the dishes and cleaning up their rooms, some parents will pay their children for doing other jobs around the house.

Of course, every family handles the problem of chores and payment in its own way. The same plan will not work out in every family.

Wondering about the future

"I'd like to know what I'm going to be when I grow up."

39%



More than one-third of the boys and girls in the problems study wanted to know what they would be when they grew up.

Nobody can really look into a crystal ball and tell you what the future holds for you. Nobody can really read the lines on your palm and tell you that some day you'll be a great artist or a successful businessman or a dancer or that you'll marry and live happily ever after.

But the things that you do now, the books you read, the hobbies you develop, the studies you become interested in, and the friends that you make, all have something to do with the kind of future you'll have.

Your studies and hobbies and the after-school jobs you take help you to learn new things about yourself—what you like to do, what you don't like to do, and what you do best.

Adults—parents, teachers, club leaders—can tell you about

the jobs they have. They can help you get more information about the ones you're interested in.



Books can help you to decide about your future career.

Books can give you many ideas—not only about the kind of job you might some day want to have, but also about the kind of person you might want to be. If you are a girl and you like Jo in *Little Women*, chances are you'll start imitating some of her characteristics. If you are a boy and enjoy reading books about inventors like Thomas Edison or the Wright Brothers or explorers like Admiral Byrd, you'll probably try to copy some of the things they did when they were young boys.

As you grow and learn more and more new things, you may find your interests changing. Don't worry about this. The more new interests you discover, the better are your chances of eventually finding an occupation you will like.

Being honest with yourself

Whatever problems you have about yourself, the important thing is to be honest—both about the problem and about yourself. Admit you have a problem. Then try to do something about it.



Health problems

Everybody wants to feel well—to be healthy. So, it *is* a problem when there is something wrong with you. Here are some of the problems about health that bother boys and girls. Put an x in the box in front of *your* health problems.

- ☐ My nose bleeds a lot.
- ☐ My teeth hurt.
- ☐ My stomach hurts a lot.
- ☐ I have no "pep."
- ☐ I can't see very well.
- ☐ I am too thin.
- ☐ I am too fat.
- ☐ I am too tall.
- ☐ I am too short.
- ☐ I wish I didn't have pimples on my face.
- ☐ I have a lot of colds.
- ☐ I'm sick a lot.
- ☐ I don't like to eat.
- ☐ I am always sleepy.
- ☐ Sometimes I get real dizzy.

What kind of health problems bother most boys and girls? Here are the findings of the problem study:

Out of every 100 boys and girls—

14 said My nose bleeds a lot.

6 said I have no "pep."

7 said My teeth hurt.

8 said I can't see very well.

8 said My stomach hurts a lot.

13 said I am too thin.

12 said I am too fat.

Linda's problem

Linda McDade was one of those who checked the item, *I have no pep*. Recess time yesterday is a good example of how Linda feels these days.

At ten o'clock sharp the girls in Miss Smith's class trooped out to the playground and divided up into two teams for a volleyball game. All except Linda. In spite of the warm sunshine, Linda felt chilly and tired. She even had a slight headache. Linda sat down on the bench by herself.

"Aren't you going to play, Linda?" one of the girls called to her.

"Oh, leave her alone," another said. "Linda *never* wants to do anything."

What should Linda do?

Linda's problem, like any of the health problems the boys and girls checked, can be solved only with the help of an expert. Doctors are the only people who can help you get started on improving your health. A doctor's examination would help Linda find out what is wrong with her and tell her why she feels the way she does. Now if Linda is to feel better, of course, she will have to follow her doctor's advice.

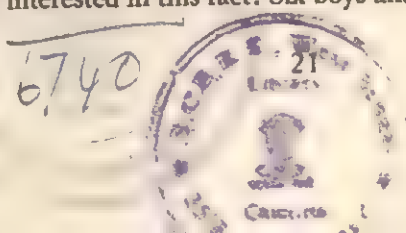
Those pimples

Did you check the statement, *I wish I didn't have pimples on my face*? If you did, you may be interested in this fact: Six boys and

8 CLEVER

Date:

Age No. 5627



girls in Miss Smith's class checked this problem. Out of every 100 boys and girls in the nationwide study, 20 said this was a problem.

Many boys and girls go through a period of having pimples while they are growing up. Luckily, the problem does not last forever. Even though you may have pimples for several years, they will disappear when you have grown up. Then your skin will be back to normal again.

Meanwhile, if pimples are your problem, there are things you can do. First of all, go see your doctor. He will probably prescribe such things as exercise, fresh air, sunlight, and extra cleanliness.



Skin trouble? See your doctor. Then carefully follow his advice.

Many people find that their skin improves when they avoid eating lots of sweets, especially chocolates and pastries. If your doctor suggests a certain diet for you, be sure to try to follow it. Remember, too, never scratch or pick or squeeze pimples. This may leave scars.

Some good health rules

Whether you checked many of the health statements or not, you probably are concerned about your health to some extent.

Everyone wants to have good health. Here are some basic health rules. Check the ones you follow.

1. I drink at least a quart of milk a day. ☐
2. I eat three good meals a day, including at least one serving of meat or fish or eggs. ☐
3. I have fruit juice or fresh fruit and a green or yellow vegetable every day. ☐
4. I have whole grain bread or cereal at each meal. ☐
5. I get at least nine hours of sleep every night. ☐
6. I play out of doors part of every day, unless the weather is bad. ☐
7. I follow common-sense rules of cleanliness. ☐
8. I brush my teeth after every meal. ☐
9. I see my dentist twice a year. ☐
10. I see my doctor once a year. ☐

Give yourself 10 points for each rule that you check.

In order to be perfectly healthy and to *stay* that way, you should have a score of 100. Anything less may mean trouble later on.

Don't be a worry-bird

After you've studied all the rules and followed them until they have become habits, another rule to remember is not to worry about your health. If you have an ache or a pain, find out what's causing it and what to do about it. But don't worry about what *might* happen as a result of every little scratch or snuffle. People who worry constantly about the hundreds of different things that *might* happen are just as annoying as those who complain constantly about not feeling well.



Problems at home

It was Sunday, and Pete Johnson's father was taking his family to the museum. Mike Rayburn, who was Pete's best friend, went along. Mike had a wonderful time looking at all the exhibits, seeing how steel was made, and going down into the model coal mine. But at home that evening he was unusually quiet.

"What's the matter, Mike?" his mother asked. "Didn't you have fun this afternoon?"

"Yeah, I guess so," Mike answered. "Only . . ." he hesitated.

"Only what?" his mother asked.

"Well, I wish Dad were home more and could spend Sundays with us the way Pete's father does. It's no fun always tagging along with somebody else's family."

A family problem

Mike's father was a salesman—he sold pens and pencils and office supplies to stores and offices all over the state. Sometimes he had to leave home on Sunday night, not to get back until the next Friday night. Sometimes, like this Sunday, he was unable to get back even for the week end.

A few evenings later when Mike's father was home, the whole family talked about the problem. Mike learned that his father had to stay at a hotel all by himself when he was away from home and that he got very lonely. He had dinner alone in the hotel restaurant and longed for a home-cooked meal and the comfortable kind of family talk that usually went on at dinner time in the Rayburn household.

Mike also found out that his mother missed having his father around, too.

Realizing all of this didn't solve Mike's problem. But knowing *why* he had the problem did make it a lot easier for him to live with it.

Everyday problems about home

You spend a big part of your life at home. Naturally, you want to be happy there. Whenever people live together and spend a lot of time in each other's company, however, you can always expect some problems to come up.

Every family has its own problems. Do you understand the problems in your family?

Here is a list of everyday problems about home which bother a great many boys and girls. Do you have any of these problems? Read them carefully and check those that bother you:

About me and my home

1. I wish we had a nice house. ☐
2. I wish we had more money. ☐
3. I'd like to have my own room. ☐
4. I'd like to take music lessons. ☐
5. I don't like to take music lessons. ☐
6. I wish my dad were home more. ☐
7. My parents are too bossy. ☐
8. I wish my parents liked me more. ☐
9. My parents treat me like a little kid. ☐
10. I have to do too much work at home. ☐
11. I wish my dad would play with me more. ☐

12. I don't like my brother. ☐
13. I don't like my sister. ☐
14. My parents don't think I'm ever right. ☐
-

Write any additional problems you have about home on the blank lines at the end of the list. Then, one by one, look at the problems you have checked. In each case, try to figure out *why* you have the problem.

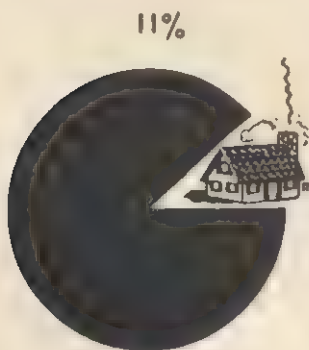
Are the problems you checked the kind of problems you have to live with? Can some of them be solved by talking things over with the family? Can some of them be solved by making some changes in the kind of person *you* are?

About home problems

Home problems are just like any other problems in many ways. Some of them can be solved right away. Some of them can be solved only if you're willing to work hard at a solution. And some of them, like Mike's problem, are problems you have to live with. But whether your problem has a simple solution or is the kind you have to live with, understanding *why* you have it and deciding to do something about it makes the rest much easier.

I wish we had a nice house

"I wish we had a nice house."



Four boys and girls in Miss Smith's class checked the problem, *I wish we had a nice house*. The results of the problem study showed that many boys and girls all over the country feel this same way. Out of every 100 boys and girls, 11 checked this problem. More girls than boys worry about this.

There are many families that just don't have enough money to

buy a nice house. But with a little work, most houses and apartments can be made nicer and more comfortable. If you aren't satisfied with the way your home looks, stop and look around a bit. You will find many things you can do to make your home nicer.

What John did

John Osby had checked this problem. When he went home that afternoon, he looked at his house very hard to see the things that didn't look very nice. He made a list of three things:

1. Two front steps are broken.
2. The front steps and porch need painting.
3. The front lawn needs fixing up.

John showed the list to his parents and told them he would be glad to do the work the house needed. His dad offered to give what time he could to help. So the two of them sat down together and planned what they would need and how much it would cost.

Then the next three Saturdays John and his father worked on



It doesn't always take a lot of money to make a house look nicer.

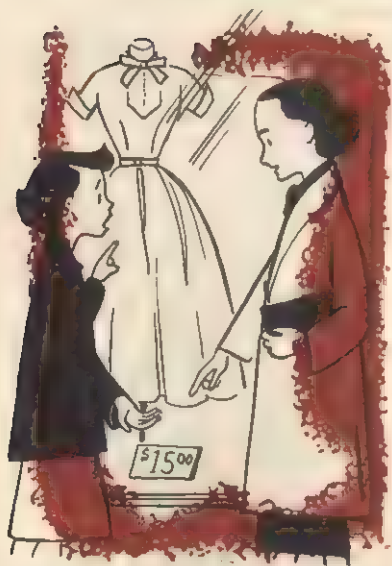
the steps, the porch, and made a good start on the lawn. And their hard work paid off. The house did look a lot better.

Cooperating at home

A nice home doesn't just happen. It means cooperation from the whole family. There are many things boys and girls can do around the house. They can help paint porches, walls, and woodwork. Girls can learn to make curtains. They can plant grass seed and flowers, dig up weeds, and mow the grass.

Do these suggestions give you some ideas of ways to make *your* home look nicer?

Money problems



Most parents can't buy everything their children want.

They haven't thought about the differences between the kinds of jobs people have and the amount of money they earn. Or about the differences between families, and how much money different

A common problem in many homes is money!

Bob wants a new bike. But his father says, "Do you think I'm *made* of money?"

Elsie has her heart set on a new dress for Eunice's party, but her mother tells her that she'll have to make the old one do—money doesn't grow on trees.

Philip can't see why he can't go to the same camp as the rest of the gang. Somehow, the other fellows' parents always manage to dig up the necessary amount of money.

Bob and Elsie and Philip haven't really thought about *why* they can't have all the things they want or think they need.

families need in order to pay the rent and provide the necessary food and clothing and care for each member of the family.

Bob's father, for example, is a night watchman. He doesn't earn as much as some of the other boys' fathers. Elsie's father and Eunice's father are both machinists at the big plant on the edge of town. But Elsie's mother was very ill last year, and the doctors' bills and the hospital bill were so big that Elsie's father had to borrow some money in order to pay them. He is still paying back what he borrowed.

Philip's father, on the other hand, earns more than either Bob's or Elsie's father. But Philip has six brothers and sisters, and each one of them makes a great big dent in the family income.

Understanding *why* they can't have everything their friends have will make it easier for boys and girls to give up some of the things they want. They will see, too, that others in the family must also make sacrifices.

And once they understand the problem, Bob and Elsie and Philip may be able to get together with their families and work out ways of saving or earning money for some of the extras they particularly want.

Growing-up-at-home problems

Many boys and girls checked the problem, *My parents treat me like a little kid* or *My parents don't think I'm ever right*.

Making parents realize their children are growing up is a difficult problem in some families. You have to try to understand parents a little bit in order to see why parents are that way.

- Your parents have taken care of you ever since you were a little baby. It is hard now for them to realize that you can do things for yourself.

- Even though you are growing up, you don't shoot up overnight. You develop in uneven stages. You may have noticed how all at once all your clothes seemed to get too small for you—after having been all right for quite a long time. One day you are grown up enough to go down town by yourself. On the next, you may childishly burst into tears because you can't have something you

want. So your parents would naturally feel that you're not so grown up after all.

- Remember, even though you are growing up, there are still many times when your parents can help you. They may be able to help you solve many of the problems you have now or problems that you will have later.

Brother and sister problems

Some brothers and sisters get along so poorly that it becomes a problem. Of course, all brothers and sisters have quarrels and disagreements from time to time. If you think about it, you can understand why. It's not always easy to share the many things brothers and sisters must share all the time—parents, rooms, money, privileges, work, food. When brother gets a little bit of extra attention, an older sister may feel left out. Some boys and girls are so afraid they'll be left out in some way that everything must be measured out, regardless of what it is—attention, allowance money, new clothing, chores, or milk.

Only life isn't that way—at home or at school, or anywhere else. A child who is hurt or ill needs more attention *at the time* than one who is well. When there is not enough money for everything, a younger child may have to accept hand-me-downs and an older child may have to do without a new spring coat to replace an outgrown one.

The problems you have with brothers and sisters are somewhat like the problems you have in getting along with other people outside of your family—your schoolmates, your friends, and the people you will work with later on. Learning to get along with brothers and sisters will help you get along with others.



Getting along with other people

Everybody wants and needs friends. People who don't have friends feel unwanted and unhappy.

Seventeen out of every 100 children in the problems study felt that they needed more friends. Thirteen out of every 100 said that they wanted to have at least one good friend.

Making friends

The problem of making friends and getting along with other people is really made up of most of the other problems you have read about in this booklet. Problems about yourself—being selfish, or sulky, or bad-tempered—may stand in the way of your getting along with other people.

Boys and girls who don't get along well at home, who are always quarreling with their brothers and sisters or fussing about

having to help at home or whining about money, are not likely to be popular with others away from home.

Young people who are sickly or tired all the time are generally not much fun to be with. They may have difficulty making friends.

Some helpful hints

Most of us like to make friends with people who are interested in the same things we are. A boy who likes active sports probably will not be a close friend of a boy who would rather read books or listen to music. A girl who likes to cook and sew and keep house may not find much in common with the girl who pitches left-handed curves for the neighborhood baseball team.



It's easier to make friends with people who share your interests.

But whatever your interests, there are some qualities that *most* people like and look for in their friends. Most people like someone who—

- Is clean and neat
- Smiles and is cheerful, but who also knows when to be sympathetic

- Is sincere and frank, but not gushy or cruelly outspoken
- Tries to help other people
- Is a good sport and enjoys the game whether he wins or loses
- Can talk about interesting things
- Doesn't always want his own way and is willing to do things the other boys and girls want to do
- Is generally friendly and thoughtful
- Has good manners

Every day—at school, at home, and at play—you learn something about getting along with other people. As you gain more experience and understanding, your problems of getting along with others become less serious.

This is clearly shown by the results of the problem study. Some of the problems that bothered boys and girls in the fourth grade disturbed only a few eighth-grade boys and girls. For example, out of every 100 fourth-grade boys and girls, 15 checked the item, *I can't make friends with very many kids*. But only seven out of 100 eighth-graders checked it. And 11 out of every 100 fourth-graders checked *People don't like me very much*. But only four out of 100 eighth-graders found that to be a problem.

Problems like these don't suddenly vanish into thin air. Somewhere between the fourth and eighth grades, many boys and girls not only learn to understand their problems, but they also find out what to do about them.

Boys and girls

Right now you probably belong to a gang or a crowd. You probably all have pretty much the same interests. For the most part, the boys prefer to spend their time with other boys and the girls prefer the girls. At your age this is natural; it's no problem.

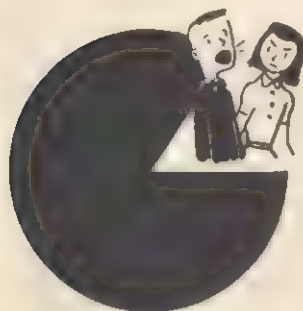
As you get older, though, you will have new interests, and with them, new problems. The boys will become more interested in girls, and the girls will become more interested in boys. You will begin to have problems about dating. Or perhaps you have them right now. These problems can be solved just like most

other problems we have discussed. Know what your problem is, understand *why* you have it, and then decide what to do about it.

Talking with people

"I always say the wrong thing at the wrong time."

15%



Talking may not seem like any problem at all. But knowing how to say the right thing at the right time—even knowing *what* to talk about to people—is a problem that bothers many boys and girls. Fifteen out of 100 boys and girls checked the problem, *I always say the wrong thing at the wrong time*.

Chuck could always think of funny things to say. He made people laugh a lot. Very often, however, Chuck's fun was at the expense of

some other person. Chuck began to think that he could say something funny at any time, about anything. But people didn't like a steady diet of Chuck's jokes. They want to be serious about serious things—for example, when discussing an illness or a difficult school problem.

Having a sense of humor is a fine thing, but you need to know when to turn it on and when to turn it off. Someone who is always clowning can be as much of a bore and as irritating as the person who never smiles and can't think of a thing to say. People like Chuck are constantly clowning because they feel they must be the center of the stage at all times.

Cliff, on the other hand, is afraid to start talking to people he doesn't know very well. When he meets someone new he gets tongue-tied and stiff, and all he can think of is how stupid everybody must think he is.

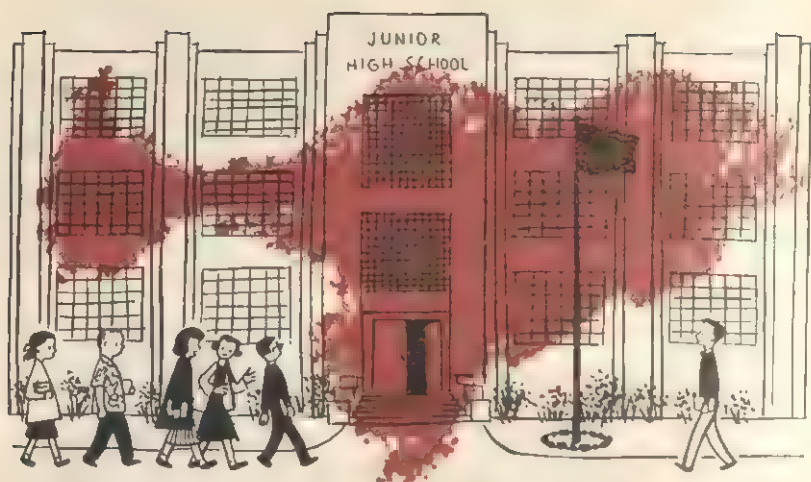
Strange as it may sound, Cliff's problem is a little bit like Chuck's. They both worry more about themselves and what others think of them than they do about other people. Cliff might try to find out what the new person is interested in, where he goes to

school, where he lives. Getting the other person to talk about himself solves many a shy person's conversation problem.

Remember, no one is uninteresting. You—like most other people—are interesting because you are a *person*, complete with feelings, ideas, plans. And as you do more things, you become a *more* interesting person. Hobbies, books, school, trips, sports, meeting other people—all these new experiences make you more interesting and make people want you for a friend.



Conversation shy? Talk about the places you go, the things you do.



Getting along in school

School is a big part of your life right now. It's your job, and it's a full-time job, too.

And, like other phases of your life, school may cause you problems.

Some school problems

In the problems study some boys and girls said they didn't see why they had to go to school. Others complained about the subjects they were taking—such as history, arithmetic, and spelling. Some were worried because they felt they couldn't read well or because the teacher used words they didn't know. And quite a few—21 per cent of the girls and 13 per cent of the boys—said that they were afraid of tests. Finding good books to read is a problem for even more boys and girls. Thirty per cent of them checked this problem.

About me and my school

Are any of these *your* problems? Put an *x* in the box after your problems.

1. I don't like school. ☐
2. I don't see why I have to go to school. ☐
3. I don't like arithmetic. ☐
4. I don't like spelling. ☐
5. I don't like history. ☐
6. I don't like geography. ☐
7. I don't like social studies. ☐
8. I don't get good grades in school. ☐
9. I'm afraid of tests. ☐
10. I can't remember my schoolwork. ☐
11. Teachers use words I don't know. ☐
12. I can't read very well. ☐
13. I can't write very well. ☐
14. I'd like to find some good books to read. ☐

What you can do

Some of these problems are pretty easy to solve. For example, if the teacher uses words you don't know, using a dictionary and reading more so that you will become familiar with more words will go far toward solving your problem.

Your teacher or librarian or the book review section of your Sunday paper will help you find good books to read.

Being afraid of tests and not liking school at all are more serious problems. Solving them may require more time and effort on your part. First, of course, you must ask yourself what the problem *really* is, and you must try to answer it honestly.

Is it really the test you're afraid of? Or are you the kind of person who can't stand competition and hates to come out with a lower mark than anyone else in the class? Or are you afraid of what your parents will say if you fail or just barely manage to pass?

What is it that you don't like about school? The subjects you study? The fact that you are expected to do a certain amount of work? Your teachers? Your classmates?

What can you do about more serious school problems like these?

Why go to school?

First of all, it's important for you to understand the part school plays in your whole life. School isn't just a device to keep you out of mischief until you're old enough to go to work.

School is a requirement for almost any kind of work you may want to do when you grow up. It's also an important requirement for getting the most out of life *right now*.

Preparing for the future doesn't mean that you must stand still while you absorb ideas and knowledge to be stored away for use years from now. The best preparation for the future is living usefully and happily in the present. Learning new subjects, discovering new interests and hobbies, making friends, practicing the rules of good citizenship—all the things that fill your life *today* with satisfaction and fun will help make your *future* life rich and satisfying and useful, too.

Improving your study habits

If you *want* to go to school but just can't seem to do well in your studies, perhaps your study habits need improving.

- **Do you plan your time carefully?**

Making a time-plan may help you find the needed time for studying, without taking away your time for play or rest.

- **Do you know how to read properly?**

Knowing how to read well—that is, reading rapidly and *understanding* and *remembering* what you have read—helps you in *all* of your studies.

- **When studying at home, do you—**

Find a good place to study—a quiet place where you won't be disturbed?

Collect all the materials you need before you sit down to work?

Know *what* you are going to do before you begin?

Have a regular time for studying and try to keep to your schedule?



Take notes on important points—because writing things down helps the information to “sink in”?

If your study habits are good and if you keep up your daily work instead of trying to “cram” all the information into your head the night before an exam, you will find that taking tests won’t be much of a problem after all.

Doing your best

Suppose your study habits are good. Suppose you are attentive and cooperative in class and you get along well with your teachers and with the other boys and girls. But no matter how hard you try, you still can’t get an *A* in science or in arithmetic. On the other hand, though, you do very well in social studies and in English classes.

Just as people differ in appearance and in personality, they differ in their abilities and skills. One student may be a wizard in science, but his English composition may be as dull as dishwater. Another may be wonderful at anything requiring mechanical understanding and skill, but arithmetic may seem more difficult to him than the most complicated motor.

If you do your best and make the most of your abilities, that is all anyone should expect of you. And it is all you should expect of yourself. People who try to excel in fields in which they have no real skill or interest can make themselves very unhappy.



People differ in the kinds of things they do well. What talents do you have?

In conclusion: what you can do

The kind of problems you have, *why* you have them, whether or not you can solve them, and how you handle them depend largely on the kind of person you are.

Every once in a while, it's a good idea to take stock of yourself—find out where you stand, how you measure up, what you'd like to change, and if and how you can change.

Knowing what your problems are and why you have them and then doing something about them, if it is possible, will give you a chance to improve your personality and become more like the person you'd like to be.

If after reading this booklet you'd like to find out more about your own special problems, you may want to ask your teacher or counselor about the *SRA Junior Inventory*. This problem checklist, based on the results of the problems study you read about in this booklet, will help you to discover your own problems.



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